

C92

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ACTION ARA=00*

INFO LOG-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
H-01 NSCE-00 NSAE-00 SSO-00 HA-09 L-03 PM-10
PA-02 OMB-01 INRE-00 ANAE-00 USIE-00 SP-02 SNP-01
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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2970

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN

USLO CARIBBEAN

24 COMPW/DOI

USCINCLANT NORFOLK VA

Dept. of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.

Release () Excise () Deny () Declassify

Date 2/27/01 Exemption _____

UNCLAS MANAGUA 06506

E.O. 12356: N/A

TAGS: PROP CASC PREL, US NU

SUBJECT: CONTINUING PRESS COVERAGE OF THE DOWNED C-123

1. EL NUEVO DIARIO ON ITS OCTOBER 9 FRONT PAGE GAVE HEAVY COVERAGE TO U.S. COMMENTARY ON THE C-123 DOWNED IN NICARAGUA ON OCTOBER 5. PRESIDENT REAGAN WAS ACCURATELY QUOTED BUT THE THRUST OF THE ARTICLE WAS TO CAST THE PRESIDENT AND OTHERS IN THE ROLE OF LIARS.

2. UNDER THE HEADLINE, "IT WAS A CIA PLANE," PRO-GON DAILY EL NUEVO DIARIO, IN A STORY DRAWN FROM AP, EFE AND ANN (NEW NICARAGUAN NEWS AGENCY), DECLARED THAT ALTHOUGH REAGAN WISHED TO WASH HIS HANDS OF THE PLANE SHOT DOWN IN NICARAGUA ON OCTOBER 5, USG INVOLVEMENT WAS EVIDENT. THE ARTICLE ALSO CITED THE STATEMENT OF UNCLASSIFIED

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A CIVILIAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE SPOKESMAN DENYING A CONNECTION BETWEEN THAT ORGANIZATION AND THE DOWNED AIRCRAFT AND RETIRED GENERAL SINGLAUB'S NEGATION OF INVOLVEMENT. SINGLAUB, HOWEVER, WAS ALSO QUOTED AS HAVING SAID IN A TV INTERVIEW "LAST SUNDAY" THAT THE WHITE HOUSE AND CIA WERE FULLY INFORMED OF HIS ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE "CONTRAS." SINGLAUB, ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, SAID THAT HIS SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR THE CONTRAS WAS DESIGNED TO GET AROUND CONGRESSIONAL RESTRICTIONS ON THE CIA AND TO SUBVERT THE WILL OF CONGRESS.

3. INTERSPERSED THROUGHOUT THE ARTICLE WERE QUOTATIONS AIMING AT SHEDDING DOUBT ON THE STATEMENTS BY THE

PRESIDENT. REPRESENTATIVE MICHAEL BARNES WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT "IT IS UNLIKELY THE USG WAS NOT INVOLVED." SENATOR LUGAR ANNOUNCED, ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, "A SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE INVESTIGATION INTO THE FLIGHT OF THE AIRCRAFT AND SENATOR KERRY REPORTEDLY NOTED THAT THERE WERE INDIVIDUALS WHO WERE MAKING THEIR OWN FOREIGN POLICY.

4. ALONGSIDE THE ABOVE NOTED ARTICLE, WAS A REPORT BY NEW YORK BASED ANN CORRESPONDENT ROBERT COHEN OF HIS TELEPHONE INTERVIEW WITH WALLACE BLAINE SAWYER, FATHER OF THE DECEASED PILOT OF THE DOWNED AIRCRAFT. SAWYER, ACCORDING TO COHEN, DESCRIBED HIS SON AS A CONTRACT PILOT WHO FLEW ALL OVER THE WORLD, LAMENTED THE DEATHS IN THE WAR OF "16,000 NICARAGUANS" AND SAID HIS FOREMOST INTEREST WAS THE RETURN OF HIS SON'S BODY AND THAT, IF NECESSARY, HE WAS WILLING TO TRAVEL TO NICARAGUA TO RETRIEVE HIS SON'S REMAINS.

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